



THE PIONEER

RURAL & RESIDENTIAL
PROPERTY

VICTOR GOSSIP – Army Number 6678 – Sapper – 1st or 3rd Australian Tunneling Company

Victor Gossip was born at 'Rosedale', Stroud on 6 September 1895 to parents James Gossip and Ada Gossip (nee Vernon). Victor was schooled in Stroud and was a great sportsman. The family moved to Macksville in 1909 and Victor moved to Sydney for work at the age of 18. Victor was known as 'Trousie' in his younger years and 'Fardie' in his later years. This is an overview of Victor's war experience and a little on his life after the war.

Gossip enlisted at the age of 21 years and 1 month on 17 October 1916 in Sydney. He served in England and France with the Australian Tunnelling Company. Victor returned to Australia on 11 June 1919 and was discharged on 20 July 1919. Victor and his fellow soldiers had the job of digging tunnels toward and into enemy lines two to four months prior to the battles. He regularly wrote home and these letters gave the family a good insight into his time overseas serving for his country.

One such letter was about a hospitalisation. Victor said he was there for treatment of a boil on the back of his neck. The family later found out that he was actually hit in the back of his neck with shrapnel. In researching our diggers I have found that they tended to send letters that depicted a more positive experience than the reality. I believe this was so the family were not as worried. Victor's wound became infected with gangrene and he developed a bad scar. Whilst still in the field, Victor heard of the death of Stroud man, Walter Greenham. Victor went in search of Walter's resting place so that he could send word home to the family. He served his country and community well but did not receive the accolades he was due.

Victor fought on the front lines of France and Belgium, mainly in the Somme. After his hospitalisation he spent time in Europe rebuilding the local infrastructure. He stayed on in France after the end of the war for 6 months to help diffuse land mines and booby trap mines. When he returned home



Victor Gossip, back left. Photo credit: Daily Examiner, 2010, supplied by Lynne Carr.

there was no recognition for his service to Australia and France from the Australian government, and all of the celebrations and welcome home parties were over. This hurt him deeply and he never joined the RSL.

Whilst overseas serving his country, sadly Victor's mother passed away at 53 years of age.

After returning home Victor gained employment with the railways. He had worked for them in Sydney before going to war and now had a job with their contractor in the Nambucca Valley to build bridges for the railway.

This article has been written from information in the files at the Stroud & District Historical Society; The Dungog Chronicle; The Clarence Valley Daily Examiner; and The Gossip Family History Version 1 (2005). Thank you to the Gossip family for allowing me to use their research.

Sharon Burke © 2015, edited 2016.